



State Cost-Share Programs

Module VII

What you will learn in this module

- What is cost-share?
- What are the objectives of the SCC programs?
- How does targeting and prioritizing play a role in program implementation?
- Steps setting up a conservation district local cost-share program.
- What is a designated cost-share sign-up?
- What types of contracts are signed to receive cost-share?
- Overview of the Cost-Share and Information Management System (CSIMS)

(cont.)

What you will learn in this module (cont.)

- What is a cost-share application ranking worksheet?
- What are the cost-share rates and limits?
- What is the Water Resources Cost-Share Program?
- What is the Non-Point Source Pollution Control program?
- What is the Riparian and Wetland Protection Program?
- What is the Buffer Initiative Program?
- What types of projects are eligible for cost-share?

What is cost-share?

- The SCC provides funds on a cost-sharing basis to assist landowners in the installation and implementation of soil and water conservation and pollution control practices. These practices are in the public interest and contribute to the protection and enhancement of water resources.
- Installation costs of these practices could exceed financial benefits accruing to the landowners and generally will create undue financial burden on landowners if no public assistance is provided.

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What is cost-share? (cont.)

- All cost-share practices are required to be built to SCC Approved Standards and Specifications. These approved standards and specifications are based primarily on USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office Technical Guide Standards and Specifications.
- Actual cost or county average cost, whichever is smaller, is used as a basis for determining the amount of cost-share assistance earned.

(cont.)

What is cost-share? (cont.)

- Cost-share can not exceed 70% of the county average or actual cost on most practices.
- The following programs administered by the SCC are targeted to address conservation and improvement of water quality and are administered locally by Kansas Conservation Districts.
 - Water Resources Cost-Share Program (WRCSP).
 - Non-Point Source Pollution Control Program (NPSPCP).
 - Riparian and Wetland Protection Program (RWPP).
 - Kansas Water Quality Buffer Initiative (BUF).
 - Information on other programs administered by the SCC can be found on the agency website at www.scc.ks.gov.

What are the objectives of the SCC programs?

- To protect federal reservoirs and other public water supplies from pollutants and siltation.
- To reduce flood damage in critical flood prone areas.
- To reduce the discharge of toxic pollutants and dissolved solids into the state waterways.
- To minimize pollution caused by organic waste from agricultural runoff.
- To reduce the nutrients reaching streams from agricultural runoff.

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What are the objectives of the SCC programs? (cont.)

- To achieve the non-point pollution reduction goals set forth by the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) process.
- To improve the health of stream riparian areas.
- To reduce soil erosion.
- To improve habitat for wildlife and aquatic species.
- To reduce the consumptive use of groundwater supplies in the High Plains Aquifer and other aquifers of the state to sustain and preserve agricultural, industrial and municipal water supplies.

How does targeting and prioritizing play a role in program implementation?

- There are not enough public funds to address all the significant water resource concerns that exist in Kansas. The concept of targeting assumes that focusing resources to a specific geographic area increases the chances for measurable improvement.
- As administrator of state cost-share programs, the SCC encourages all conservation districts to prioritize and target financial assistance to the practice or area that would provide the highest water quality and/or water conservation benefit.

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How does targeting and prioritizing play a role in program implementation? (cont.)

- The goal of cost-share administration is the effective and efficient expenditure of limited funds to improve and protect Kansas' water resources. Districts are encouraged NOT to provide financial assistance to landowners based on non-water resource improvement or protection criteria or directing cost-share to the most easily installed practice.
- A conservation districts system for prioritizing and targeting must be compatible with the Kansas Legislature, Kansas Water Plan, and SCC's goals.

Steps setting up a conservation district local cost-share program

- Prior to the beginning of each program year, the conservation district designates and publicizes a sign-up period to receive landowner requests for cost-share financial assistance.
- In May, the State Conservation Commission (SCC) notifies the conservation districts of the allocation for the upcoming program year for the Water Resources Cost-Share Program and Non-Point Source Pollution Control Program. The allocation process is not applicable to the Riparian and Wetland Protection Program.

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Steps setting up a conservation district local cost-share program. (cont.)

- The conservation district develops the local program based on local conservation needs, completes the District Program (CS2), and submits for approval to the SCC.
- Following SCC approval of the district program, the conservation district ranks and approves Contracts for Financial Assistance, and submits electronically to the SCC for approval.
- After the conservation practice(s) is completed, the Certification of Completion/ Request for Payment is submitted to the SCC.

What is a designated cost-share sign-up?

- The conservation district shall accept landowner requests for cost-share assistance during a designated sign-up period.
- A conservation district must have at least one sign-up period with a specified beginning and ending date, such as January 1 through April 30. SCC recommends a minimum of two weeks.
- However, having a longer sign-up period not only allows more time for anyone interested to sign up, but provides more time for the proposed practices to be evaluated and necessary paper work to be completed by the conservation district.

What types of contracts are signed to receive cost-share?

- A Landowner Agreement must be signed by the landowner receiving cost-share.
- The contract is between a landowner and SCC not the conservation district.
- When the SCC approves the contract and is signed by the landowner, the contract obligates the landowner to fulfill all requirements.
- The SCC is obligated to pay the agreed upon cost-share to the landowner after practice completion. The practice must be certified by a qualified representative indicating the practice was completed according to all SCC requirements.
- The landowner is required to maintain the practice according to SCC required maintenance procedures for a minimum of 10 years.

What is a cost-share application ranking worksheet?

- The conservation district shall develop a ranking worksheet to rank requests for cost-share that fall under the WRCSP and the NPSPCP.
- The criteria used in the ranking worksheet must be water quality resource based, i.e. targeted watershed areas above public water source, soil saved, and proximity to receiving water body. Ranking entirely by practices is not acceptable.
- Only in circumstances involving multiple applicants with equal priority would a district impose first-come/first-served method of awarding cost-share assistance. The conservation district board must approve the ranking worksheet.

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What is a cost-share application ranking worksheet? (cont.)

- The district submits the ranking worksheet electronically to the SCC for approval when submitting the district program for approval.
- A ranking worksheet is completed for each eligible request.
- After the close of the designated sign-up period, eligible practices that rank the highest based on the ranking worksheets will be the contracts approved by the district board.

What are the cost-share rates and limits?

- The conservation district board approves the Practices, Components, County Average Costs, Cost-Share Levels, Landowner Limit, and Project Limits as part of the District Program (CS-2).
- The conservation district shall determine the maximum Cost-Share Rate for each practice component (not to exceed 70%). Grass reseeding can not exceed a 50% maximum Cost-Share Rate. All Livestock Waste Management projects must have a Cost-Share Rate of 70%.
- The conservation district shall establish a district Landowner Limit not to exceed \$10,000 per program.
- The conservation district must also establish a district Project Limit for each Project Type, which has to be equal to or less than the district Landowner Limit and SCC Project Limit.

What is the Water Resources Cost-Share Program (WRCSP)?

- The WRCSP provides financial incentives to landowners for the establishment of conservation practices that reduce soil erosion, improve or protect water quality, and reduce the consumptive use of water supplies.
- The WRCSP addresses issues contained in the *Kansas Water Plan* Policy and Basin Sections. In addition, the WRCSP may address local concerns as identified by county conservation districts.
- The WRCSP focuses on the following issues:
 - Water quality protection and restoration in watersheds designated for Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL).
 - Protection of public water supply lakes and groundwater sources.
 - Priority issues identified through the State Water Planning Process.
 - Improving irrigation delivery system efficiencies in targeted areas.

What is the Non-Point Source Pollution Control program (NPSPCP)?

- The Non-Point Source Pollution Control Program that provides technical and financial assistance for restoring and protecting surface and groundwater quality through the installation of pollution control measures/structures and through information and educational assistance.
- Conservation districts receive funding from the SCC in the form of annual allocations that are used to provide grants to landowners on a cost-share basis to implement a locally developed Non-Point Source Pollution Control Management Plan.
- The *Kansas Water Plan* priority watersheds and river basins, as well as streamways and water bodies identified through Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) establishment receive targeted funding. Primary contaminants addressed by the NPSPC program are fecal bacteria, nutrients, pesticides, and urban NPS concerns.

How do the WRCSP and the NPSPCP differ?

- The WRCSP focuses primarily on soil erosion reduction.
- The focus of the NPSPCP is water quality
- The NPSPCP provides funds for technical assistance to the conservation districts.
- The NPSPCP provide information and education funds to conservation districts.
- Each program has common and unique practices.

What is the Riparian and Wetland Protection Program?

- The goal of the Riparian and Wetland Protection Program (RWPP) is to protect, enhance, and restore riparian areas, wetlands, and associated habitats by providing technical, educational, and financial assistance to landowners and the public in general.
- Major objectives of the program are the design and installation of projects which demonstrate the effectiveness of riparian and wetland protection in terms of stream functions, water quality and wildlife benefits, and to increase the knowledge and awareness of landowners and the general public on the value and benefits of these natural areas.

What is the Buffer Initiative?

- The Kansas Water Quality Buffer Initiative is an incentive program complementing the Federal Conservation Reserve Program. State incentives supplement federal incentives to encourage the establishment of riparian forest buffers and vegetative filter strips.
- The SCC will enter into 10-15 year contracts, subject to annual appropriation, to compensate landowners for acres enrolled in the initiative.
- Supplemental payments offered under the Initiative will match 30-50 percent of the federal payment, based on the type of vegetation planted.

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What is the Buffer Initiative (cont.)

- The incentive portion of the Initiative is currently eligible on lands located in the high priority Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) areas of all 12 Kansas River Basins, all lands draining into the 20 federal reservoirs utilized for drinking water, and other designated priority areas.
- The Initiative also provides property tax incentives for landowners statewide who enroll buffers adjacent to streams in the Conservation Reserve Program.

What is the Buffer Initiative (cont.)

- The goal of the Kansas Water Quality Buffer Initiative is to reduce non-point source pollution runoff in the targeted areas by 50 percent.
- Research at various universities, including Kansas State University, has concluded that riparian buffers and filter strips are capable of reducing the runoff of sediments, nitrogen, phosphorous, and herbicides by 50 to 85 percent.
- This program also provides funds to districts to hire Buffer Coordinators to implement the program. Districts may implement the Buffer Program without hiring a coordinator.

What types of projects are eligible for cost-share?

- Erosion/Sediment Control.
- Irrigation and Water Conservation.
- Pasture and Rangeland Management.
- Riparian Area Protection and Enhancement.
- Abandoned Water Well Plugging.
- Livestock Waste Management.
- On-Site Wastewater System.
- Wetland Development/Restoration.

(This is not an inclusive list)

Cost-Share and Information Management System (CSIMS)

- CSIMS is an automated and integrated computer system designed to manage the state cost-share programs, buffer initiative, as well as the conservation district information for supervisors, employees, directory, and annual meetings.
- The system supports program, practice, and contract data from a single, centrally managed database for the cost-share programs.
- This database contains financial control and reference information needed to administer program/contract management and reporting needs.

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Cost-Share and Information Management System (cont.)

- CSIMS is used to process cost-share applications for the following state programs:
 - Water Resources Cost-Share Program.
 - Non-Point Source Pollution Control Program.
 - Kansas Water Quality Buffer Initiative.
 - Riparian and Wetland Protection Program.

Review questions

1. Actual cost not county average cost, is used as a basis for determining the amount of cost-share assistance earned.

True or False?

2. A conservation districts system for prioritizing and targeting must be compatible with
 - a. *the Kansas Legislature,*
 - b. *Kansas Water Plan,*
 - c. *SCC's goals, or*
 - d. *All of the above.*

(cont.)

Review questions (cont.)

3. A conservation district may have as many cost-share sign-up periods as desired.

True or False?

4. The cost-share contract is between a landowner and SCC not the conservation district.

True or False?

Review questions

5. The maximum cost-share rate for each practice component is 70%.

True or False?

6. How do the WRCSP and the NPSPCP differ?

- a. The WRCSP focuses primarily on soil erosion reduction.*
- b. The focus of the NPSPCP is water quality*
- c. The NPSPCP provides funds for technical assistance to the conservation districts.*
- d. All of the above.*

Answers to review questions

1. Actual cost not county average cost, is used as a basis for determining the amount of cost-share assistance earned.

False. Actual cost and county average cost are used – whichever is the lesser amount.

2. A conservation districts system for prioritizing and targeting must be compatible with

d. All of the above

Answers to review questions

3. A conservation district may have as many cost-share sign-up periods as desired.

True

4. The cost-share contract is between a landowner and SCC not the conservation district.

True

Answers to review questions

5. The maximum cost-share rate for each practice component is 70%.

False. Grass reseeding can not exceed a 50% maximum Cost-Share Rate.

6. How do the WRCSP and the NPSPCP differ?

d. All of the above.

Summary

This module provides an overview of the state cost-share programs. For detailed program implementation policies, guidelines and procedures, please refer to the SCC Programs Manual located in the conservation district office.

Resources Available

- **Resources Available**
 - SCC Programs Manual
- **Where to find it**
 - Located in each district office and on the SCC web site.
www.scc.ks.gov